SEStran Regional Bus Strategy	
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1.1   Introduction

The Fairer Scotland Duty (FSD) places a legal responsibility on certain public bodies in Scotland to actively consider how they can reduce **inequalities of outcome** caused by socio-economic disadvantage when making **strategic decisions** or **developing policy**. This differs from the Public Sector Equality Duty which considers only reducing inequalities of opportunity. The Duty seeks to tackle socio-economic disadvantage and reduce the inequalities associated with being disadvantaged. It is closely related to issues of poverty which may affect outcomes across health, housing, education and training and employment prospects.

The FSD identifies a need to consider both 'communities of place' and 'communities of interest' in terms of people who share an experience and are particularly impacted by socio-economic disadvantage (Scottish Government, 2021a). Demographic groups who share one or more of the protected characteristics listed in Section 4 of the Equality Act 2010 can be considered 'communities of interest', meaning there is a direct link between the Fairer Scotland Duty and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

This Scoping Report sets out the background to the SEStran Regional Bus Strategy study and presents the evidence base and Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment process to be undertaken at an interim impact assessment stage during the options appraisal stage of the study.

2   SEStran Regional Bus Strategy

2.1   Study Background

The development of a SEStran Regional Bus Strategy has its foundations embedded in the SEStran Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) (2021 – 2035), and its vision, priorities and objectives, and clear policy statement setting out the aim for a world class passenger focused public transport system.

The 2035 SEStran RTS was published in 2023 and reinforces national policy ambitions, setting out the following Vision for transport in the region:

A South-East of Scotland, fully integrated to reflect new national, regional and local policy priorities. It sets out the type of region we want the South-East of Scotland to be and how transport can contribute to achieving that for everyone. The vision also shapes the strategy objectives by providing a high-level context and long-term focus for the strategy.

The RTS signals the need for transformational change in transport and travel behaviour. The strategy recognises the transport challenges around active travel, public transport, mixed modes, freight, and car use. The challenges addressed those from a user perspective, which cover issues such as travel costs, the lack of public transport connectivity and services, confusing travel information, safety, accessibility, and reliability.

The RTS concluded that the **strategy Vision will not be achieved without improving the quality and integration of the bus network and set out a policy aiming for a world class passenger focused public transport system**. Given this conclusion, the need for the development of a SEStran Regional Bus Strategy (SRBS) was recognised with the new powers and opportunities available through the Transport (Scotland) Act

The development of the world class system is guided by the RTS 'Transforming and extending the bus service' mobility theme which focuses on the spatial context for the RTS and future RTS Delivery Plans, setting out the

strategic gateways, corridors and locations that will be a focus for future transport appraisal and investment to support regional development priorities and economic strategies.

In seeking to deliver its vision, the RTS sets out four strategic objectives to anchor the strategy within the wider societal goals transport needs to help:

- Transition to a sustainable, post-carbon transport system

- Facilitate healthier travel options

- Transform public transport connectivity and access across the region

- Support safe, sustainable and efficient movement of people and freight across the region

From these priorities, four transport objectives were set covering the transport system in terms of sustainability, healthier travel options, connectivity, and safety and efficiency.

The RTS sets out a range of policies and actions that will shape investment in transport for the next 10 to 15 years. This aims to ensure the climate emergency is addressed by meeting the Scottish Government's target to reduce car traffic levels by 20% by 2030. This will need investment in active travel and public transport so these become attractive modal choices and achieve a key theme within the strategy of *reducing car km and car mode share.*

The SEStran Regional Bus Strategy is being developed through the consideration of:

- the role of bus in delivery of the RTS;

- the spatial context of the bus network; and

- the attributes and components of a world class bus network for the region.

The option development and appraisal process will consider the operating and funding model (from the range of bus reform options available to SEStran) and during the option appraisal process will be informed by this Fairer Duties Scotland Impact Assessment. The appraisal will identify the most appropriate operating and funding model(s) for the region, taking into account the powers available through the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019.

3   Evidence base

3.1   Socio-Economic Disadvantage

3.1.1   Introduction

The South East Scotland region is incredibly diverse and includes areas which fall into each of the Scottish Government's six-fold urban-rural classes, from large urban to remote rural areas. The population of the SEStran region is approximately 1.6 million, has experienced significant population growth which is set to continue. The region has a landmass of 8,400km^2 which is over 10% of Scotland's landmass. The area has many challenges with an ageing population with the proportion of pensionable age grew by 31% between 2001 and 2018. Also, there are high levels of inequality with every region in South east Scotland having a datazone rated in the bottom 10% most deprived nationally (Jacobs, 2020).

People who live in the most deprived areas are most likely to experience conditions which limit their opportunities in life and poverty is a key driver of poor health and educational and economic attainment outcomes. The impacts of Cost of Living crisis on income are likely to exacerbate existing poverty and societal inequalities in the region, raising further the importance of transport to facilitate fairer outcomes through reducing inequalities of access to activities essential to a more inclusive economy. There are also strong overlaps between people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage (communities of place) with groups who

have protected characteristics such as women, disabled people, older people and ethnic minorities (communities of interest). This section summarises some of the key equalities issues and evidence relating to socio-economic disadvantage as it relates to transport issues.

3.1.2 Access to Transport

Transport has an underpinning role in tackling poverty, socio-economic and health inequalities and supporting inclusive economic growth. It helps people to get to work, education and training opportunities, to access healthcare and other services and to participate more fully in society. In particular, many jobseekers and those on low incomes rely on public transport (particularly the bus) to reach these opportunities.

Analysis undertaken as part of the Case for Change for the SEStran Regional Bus Strategy highlights that 4% of households across the South East region do not have access to a bus stop (within a suitable walking catchment defined (for this analysis) as within 400m in large urban and urban areas, within 600m with accessible small towns and rural small towns, and within 800m in accessible rural areas and remote rural areas); 13% of households (defined as having access to a bus stop) have a bus less often than every 30 minutes, with this rising to 20% for stops located outside of Edinburgh; 48% of households outside of Edinburgh have no direct bus to Edinburgh on a weekday, nearly one in ten households (8%) have no access to a service after 19:00 (rising to 11% outside of Edinburgh); and 9% of households are not served by a Sunday service. This limits the use of the bus network by many including for employment, education, leisure and social activities, especially in more rural areas.

Access to transport can reinforce or lessen the impact of poverty. Being unable to access or afford transport can prevent people accessing services, reduce quality of life and lead to social isolation (Titheridge, Christie, Mackett, Hernadez, & Ye, 2014). This can increase inequalities linked to income, such as health inequalities (Lucas, 2019) and generally contribute to and intensify the experience of poverty and social inequalities that persist. Transport can also act as a key barrier to (or enabler of) employment and to better employment.

Levels of walking as a means of transport and as way to keep fit or for exercise are higher in the SEStran region than the national average (Jacobs, 2020).This suggests higher levels of physical activity which is beneficial for health and this is also reflected in higher life expectancies compared to the national average. A male born in the SEStran region between 2016-18 is expected to live to 77.8 years old on average compared with the national average of 77.1 years old. Similarly, a female born at the same time would be expected to live to 81.4 years old in the SEStran region compared to a national average of 81.1 years old. Active travel is also beneficial in reducing limiting long term conditions like obesity.

In Scotland, people on lower incomes are more likely to use bus than those on higher incomes, with 51% of those with household incomes up to £10,000 per annum having used the bus in the past week, compared with 27% of those with household incomes over £50,000 per annum (Transport Scotland, 2022a). Those on the lowest incomes often reported longer journey times across most journey purposes.

The SEStran RTS highlighted that transport problems such as lack of public transport connectivity and low/no services in some areas having significant economic consequences with the additional time it takes to make some journeys and the negative impact this has on employment opportunities. Therefore, one of the main aims of improving connectivity is to improve access to jobs.

Analysis of the working age population catchment of each of employments sites by public transport and car shows that the Edinburgh sites have the largest population catchments and that the number that can access each site by public transport within a given time period is substantially less than by car. In the case of Straiton, Newbridge Industrial Estate and Halbeath – Fife the population that can access the site by public transport in 15 minutes is only 1% of that which can do so by car (Stantec, 2021). Similar disparities exist in the relative accessibility of health facilities by car and public transport with key problems cited in the survey around lack of direct public transport services, frequency of services and availability of parking at hospitals.

There are also large inequalities in access to private cars in the SEStran region, with car ownership strongly linked with employment and household income. Affordability of transport is a key factor affecting those on low incomes with those in lower income households more likely to travel by bus while people in higher income households are more likely to drive or take the train (Jacobs, 2020).

People living in rural areas are likely to have reduced access to employment and essential services. Public transport travel often involves long journeys, sparse timetables and expensive ticketing in comparison with urban areas. Many people who have a National Entitlement Card (bus pass) cannot use their bus pass, as there are poor bus services (or no accessible buses) in their areas as many of these routes are not commercially viable and services have been withdrawn (MACS, 2019). Evidence also indicates limited integration between public transport services and modes, particularly in rural areas (Jacobs and AECOM, 2021a). Whilst owning a car can improve access, car ownership may push low income households into poverty (see below on 'forced car ownership'). Reduced access to opportunities for employment, training and education may inhibit deprived households from improving their situation (Jacobs and AECOM, 2022).

3.1.3   Affordability of Transport

The affordability, availability and integration of transport to people facing socio-economic disadvantage through low incomes and wealth is a key equalities issue. This characteristic influences how people use and experience the transport network. Further, the transport network itself influences inequalities of opportunity and outcome related to income and socio-economic status (for example through the extent to which it facilitates access to employment and through the costs of using it). People living in areas with higher levels of deprivation tend to have poorer public transport links, fewer employment opportunities and in some cases fewer local services (Poverty and Inequality Commission, 2019). Those living in the 10% most deprived areas are more likely to walk or catch the bus to travel to work or school (Transport Scotland, 2020). Being able to access education, employment and training is critical for low income households as a means of escaping poverty, as well as for general wellbeing (Transport Scotland, 2021).

How a person interacts with the transport network is influenced by their income. National statistics (Transport Scotland, 2019 &, Transport Scotland, 2020) have shown that people in lower income households are significantly more dependent on public transport and they are more likely to travel by bus, while people in higher income households are more likely to drive. Parents who are unable to afford transport, have to take long walks for shopping, get isolated from support groups and reduce household spending including food (Transport Scotland, 2021). As household income reduces, the proportion that is spent on children's travel tends to increase, with those on lower income likely to spend more than 51% of household spending on children's travel (Transport Scotland, 2022b). There is also a spatial relationship between transport connectivity and material wealth with deprived areas tending to have poorer public transport links than areas with high material wealth, in terms of both service quality and the range of options available (Lucas, 2011; Titheridge, 2014).

SEStran identify that the cost of transport is a significant barrier in people's ability to use the transport network (Stantec, 2021). Key affordability issues are:

- Unaffordable public transport services: many people are excluded from accessing education, employment, healthcare, and other essential services due to a lack of affordable transport. Impacts are felt the most for those on lower incomes who are also more likely to be dependent on the use of public transport.

- Housing costs: Due to increasing population and reducing average household sizes there is a lack of affordable housing in parts of South East Scotland leading to increased travel distances. This is especially prevalent in Edinburgh with many moving out of the city in order to access more affordable housing.

- Forced car ownership: Some journeys cannot be made by public transport, and other can require many interchanges resulting in longer journey times, leading to higher levels of inconvenience and costs.

- Public transport fares: Travel by bus can be unaffordable for people especially those who are on lower income or unemployed. South East Scotland region lacks an offering of integrated fares and caps on fares.

Despite poor service coverage, people in low income households are more likely to travel by bus due to the affordability barriers to the private car. 41% of people living in a household with income less than £10,000 in Scotland use a bus at least once per week, compared to 15% for those with an income greater than £50,000 (Transport Scotland, 2019). Cuts to subsidised bus services therefore have a disproportionate impact on people in low income households facing other forms of socio-economic disadvantage. Difficulty accessing public transport is only one issue with connectivity. There are also links between poverty and access to cycles. Household access to bikes increases with household income. 62% of households with an income of £50,000 or more have access to one or more bikes, compared to 20% of households with an income up to £10,000 (Transport Scotland, 2019). Bicycle access is higher in rural areas than urban areas.

The key issues experienced by low income families in accessing essential services by public transport have been identified (McHardy & Robertson, 2021) as:

- Cost – the cost of journeys is particularly crucial when travelling with young children as high fares can make short journeys expensive[1];

- Scheduling – inflexible timings often cause problems for shift workers, those with caring responsibilities or connecting between different forms of transport; and

- Infrastructure and services – significant wait times between services where these are operated by different bus companies with extended travel times.

Public transport costs can be significant for those on low incomes and particularly for people in rural areas who travel longer distances and face higher costs (Poverty and Inequality Commission, 2019). Cost increases of fares disproportionately impact on socio-economically disadvantaged groups which increases inequalities of opportunity and outcomes (Jacobs, 2020). The affordability of bus services varies across Scotland with costs of travel to essential services generally much higher in remote rural areas (Citizens Advice Bureau, 2016). Evidence indicates that people in low income households are often excluded from maintaining social connections or accessing employment, health and training opportunities due to the affordability and availability of transport options. The single most important factor cited by those on low incomes as the greatest transport-related barrier is cost (Transport Scotland, 2020) and transport fares represents a significant cost for groups including low paid, low-skilled, people working irregular shifts/hours and people experiencing in-work poverty (Scottish Government, 2019).

It is also relevant to note that one of the key issues for SEStran is that the cost of public transport relative to the cost of car use and general cost inflation has increased (Stantec, 2022). Analysis undertaken to inform the Regional Bus Strategy Case for Change highlighted that, in Scotland, between 2004-05 and 2021-22, whilst bus fares have increased by 88%, this has largely reflected increasing operating costs per bus-kilometre which have increased by 98% (both in current prices) - similarly, and reflecting the reduction in passenger numbers, the operating cost per passenger has increased by 215% over this period (all figures in current prices).

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[1] The introduction of new concessionary fare schemes on buses for children and young people across Scotland in 2022 will have reduced this effect somewhat

3.1.4   Transport and Poverty

'Transport poverty' where a lack of affordable travel options prohibits access to employment and essential services has been estimated to impact more than one million people across Scotland (Sustrans Scotland, 2016). Unaffordable and unreliable public transport limits access to job opportunities for residents of low-income areas (Stantec, 2022). This can lead to higher transport costs for people living in areas of high multiple deprivation, compounding inequalities of income. Research published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation identified that poor service coverage, reliability and or affordability of public transport discourages people with low incomes to commute to employment sites, reinforcing socio-economic disparities (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2018).

A 'poverty premium' effect also occurs for people on low incomes who may be forced to pay more for food and other services where lack of access to transport prevents them from making journeys to cheaper shops/supermarkets etc. (Davies, 2016). Young people in lowest income groups tend to report longer journey times across most journey purposes (Transport Scotland, 2022b). Transport cost increases can also disproportionately affect socio-economically disadvantaged groups particularly where real-terms increases exceed the general cost of living measured by the retail prices index. This has been the case between 2010 and 2020 where bus fares in Scotland increased by 34% above inflation. Many low-income families may therefore be less able to maintain social relationships or access health, work or training possibilities that could improve their standard of living (Jacobs and AECOM, 2022).

'Forced car ownership' occurs in urban and suburban areas, but it is particularly a concern for low-income households in rural areas (Crisp, Gore, & McCarthy, 2017). Low public transport accessibility can make car ownership a necessity for people to commute to work or access basic services (Curl, Clark, & Kearns, 2017). This is highlighted by figures in Scotland showing that 37% of households with a net annual income of up to £10,000 had one or more private cars available, compared to 84% of households with annual net income above £25,000. Those in rural areas are also more likely to own a car (87%) compared to those in large urban areas (62%) (Jacobs, 2020). The issue of forced car ownership can also be compounded, and likely influenced by, higher fares for bus travel in rural areas across Scotland (Citizens Advice Bureau, 2016). It may also occur in households with a disabled person if accessibility barriers prevent individuals from being able to make some journeys by public transport or active travel.

A Regional Spatial Strategy (Stantec, 2021) has been prepared for the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region which covers Edinburgh, Fife, West Lothian, Midlothian, East Lothian, Scottish Borders. This sets out a commitment to meeting significant levels of housing growth in the region and providing for sustainable economic development. The RSS highlights the importance of connectivity to the region noting that it is both about transport infrastructure and strong connections between communities and settlements to ensure there are no barriers to participation. There are concerns that cross-boundary deficiencies in connectivity and affordable public transport options are leading to disconnection from work opportunities, including in more rural areas.

In rural and remote areas, commuting, accessing key services and undertaking other everyday activities generally involves longer journeys relative to more urban areas. This means higher fuel costs or public transport fares and less time available for other activities. Remoteness from towns, larger employment centres and key facilities coupled with more limited transport options also reduces access to jobs and services and reduced choice of goods, services and employment opportunities. This is especially true for individuals and households that do not have access to a car. These access-related issues are central to rural experiences of deprivation and social isolation. Young people in towns and rural areas were more likely to report that they rarely take part in leisure type activities. Across all activities, those living on islands were the most likely to indicate that they only rarely or never participated (Transport Scotland, 2022b). Access to activities by public transport plays a key role for people in towns, rural and island communities. Public transport services are critical for people in rural areas who cannot drive or do not have access to a car. However, in most cases,

access to employment and key services by public transport in rural areas means much longer journey times compared to car users.

The challenges of accessing employment by public transport from rural and remote areas can mean a greater dependency on limited local employment opportunities, or, alternatively, relatively high public transport fares for the longer journeys required to get to larger centres of employment. Both of these can pose challenges for household income and expenditure, although in different ways.

Inequalities of health outcomes is an issue affecting people with socio-economic disadvantage. In South East Scotland, SEStran identify a number of drivers for health outcomes including the need to promote active travel as a means to improve health. Factors such as isolation and loneliness have impacts on health and are recognised as challenges along with the risks of poor air quality which are closely related to transport in built up areas. Air pollutants increase the incidence of a large number of diseases in all groups but with disproportionate impacts on children, older people, people with existing health conditions and areas of higher deprivation (Stantec, 2022). Impacts of air pollution includes low birth weight, premature birth stillbirth or organ damage in the womb and reduced lung capacity for children (Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, 2019).

Access to healthcare is also a critical requirement for residents of the region and will be becoming increasingly important as the proportion of the population that is elderly increases. During the development of the RTS analysis was undertkaen of the relationship between poor public transport connectivity to healthcare services (hospitals with outpatient facilities weight by the number of day case patients) and high levels of health deprivation to identify locations where there may be a correlation using the CDAT tool.

The CDAT connectivity analysis tool has also been used to assess the correlation between employment deprivation using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) health domain and public transport connectivity. This again categorises postcodes into three tiers with those in Tier 3 being the ones where there is a high degree of correlation between poor public transport connectivity to healthcare and healthcare deprivation (relative to other similar geographical areas).

This shows that there are concentrations of Tier 3 postcodes, which are those showing the highest correlation between the SIMD health deprivation index and poor public transport connectivity to healthcare (relative to places of the same geography), around the periphery of Edinburgh, in West Lothian, Falkirk, Clackmannanshire and the Levenmouth area of Fife in particular.

Those on low incomes and people with irregular working patterns may be unable to benefit from existing discounted travel schemes such as monthly passes. Concessionary fare schemes that offer free or discounted travel can make a real difference to those on low incomes but are not available to everyone who might need them (The Poverty and Inequality Commission, 2019). The concessionary fare scheme in Scotland makes travel by bus free for those over 60 (and under 22) however for rail travel the fare is only discounted by one third, making availability of bus services particularly important for older and younger people with lower available income (AECOM and Stantec, 2020).

3.2   Communities of Interest

Many people living with socio-economic disadvantage also have protected characteristics ('communities of interest') that may exacerbate the difficulties they experience. People facing other forms of structural disadvantage, such as sexism, racism, homophobia, and ableism, constitute a disproportionate number of those facing socio-economic disadvantage. Affordability barriers to the transport system intersects with other forms of disadvantage. Individuals who face structural disadvantages in society in these communities of interest are disproportionately impacted by income poverty and often employment deprivation which

compounds disadvantage including by limiting the ability of people to access and use the transport system (Stantec, 2021).

Evidence suggests that bus fare rises in particular have a disproportionate impact on women, younger people, disabled people, black and ethnic minority people, people who are unemployed and seeking work, and lower income households as people in these groups are more likely to use buses to meet their everyday travel needs (Transport Scotland, 2020)[2].

Evidence on socio-economic disadvantage relevant to specific 'communities of interest' has identified the following issues:

- Women in Scotland are more likely to be in lower paid work than men, with 61% of people paid below the Living Wage being female (Scottish Parliament, 2020). In particular, lone parents, the vast majority of whom are women, are more likely to be living in poverty than other single working-age adults in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2021). Over the period 2014-16, 38.4% of lone households in Scotland were in relative poverty before housing costs. Further, a lone-parents' ability to work is structured by the availability of childcare.

- While there is a National Concessionary Travel Scheme for those eligible, disabled people are more likely to experience affordability barriers to transport relative to people without disabilities. Individuals who live in households with a disabled person are more likely to experience income poverty than those without (UK Department for Work and Pensions, 2021) and all ethnic groups experience higher poverty and unemployment rates than average (Stantec UK, 2019).

- People from ethnic minority groups are more likely to be in relative poverty after housing costs compared to those from the 'White - British' and 'White - Other' groups (Scottish Government, 2023). As noted, people in ethnic minority groups are less likely to have access to a car, are more likely to experience higher rates of poverty, and rely on public transport more than other groups and are potentially more vulnerable to disadvantage where transport services are changed, reduced, or become more expensive. Issues of transport cost and safety may therefore disproportionately affect these groups and affect their health and socio-economic outcomes.

- There is a lack of data which evidences a direct relationship between being transgender and income inequality. However, such persons are likely to have lower income and wealth and are therefore at a higher risk of transport poverty[3]. Transgender people face widespread discrimination and targeted hostility, unequal access to services, and workplace discrimination (Equalities and Human Rights Commission, 2010). Difficulties accessing employment and services which increase disposable income (including healthcare free at the point of use and housing) suggest lower income and associated affordability barriers to transport.

Owing to these relationships, policies in the emerging SRBS should seek to identify any differential impacts on different socio-economic groups (e.g. disaggregated by income, wealth, or social class). Differential impacts between such groups are likely to also be manifest within and between groups with other characteristics and social identities with disproportionate rates of poverty and low income and wealth.

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[2] Some of the challenges in relation to affordability of bus fares for young people may have been alleviated since the introduction across Scotland in early 2022 of a concessionary bus scheme for people under 22.

[3] Limited data does exist, for example, a 2007 survey of 71 Transgender people in Scotland found that 30% of respondents had an income of over £20,000, and 48% of respondents had an income under £10,001. Scottish Transgender Alliance (2008). Transgender Experiences in Scotland Research Summary

4   Proposed Assessment Framework

4.1   Introduction

The following guide framing questions and assessment criteria matrix will be applied to testing the performance of the emerging SEStran Regional Bus Strategy (SRBS) options in relation to implementing the FSD. This provides a transparent framework to assess the extent to which emerging SRBS components reduce inequalities of outcome resulting from low income, low wealth and multiple deprivation.

 The assessment will be informed through engagement activities with relevant groups of interest and impact (as discussed below).

4.2   Guide Questions

The framing questions, as set out below, will be applied in relation to the two key parts of the Duty, with relevant criteria identified from the statutory guidance including:

- Socio-economic disadvantage, which is influenced by low income, low/no wealth, material and area deprivation and socio-economic background; and

- Inequality of outcome, including education, skills, employment, crime, health and wellbeing, life expectancy, living standards, poverty and connectivity.

These criteria will be considered with respect to communities of place and communities of interest where evidence and data available has supported this examination.

Guide Framing Questions: Fairer Scotland Duty

Will the emerging SRBS and its associated delivery mechanisms…

- *Reduce cost related barriers to accessing and use of all transport modes?*

- *Low income: help to reduce levels of absolute and relative income poverty?*

- *Low wealth: help to reduce inequality in the distribution of household wealth?*

- *Material deprivation: support individuals and households to access basic goods and services?*

- *Area deprivation: help to reduce level of multiple deprivation affecting communities?*

- *Reduce physical and informational barriers to accessing and using all transport modes?*

- *Reduce unequal access to employment opportunities, social and cultural activities, and public services and amenities for all?*

- *Socio-economic background: address structural inequalities resulting from differences in social class?*

- *Support the regeneration of disadvantaged or deprived areas?*

- *Facilitate and encourage use of public transport, active travel, and physical recreation, in particular for those facing socio-economic disadvantage?*

- *Support economic development through facilitating the growth of Scotland's key economic sectors?*

- *Support increased provision of higher skilled and higher value employment, particularly for those facing socio-economic disadvantage?*

- *Support the provision of adequate transport infrastructure, services, and facilities to meet identified population and economic needs, in particular those facing socio-economic disadvantage*

- *Contribute to the achievement of the Duty's aims and desired outcomes?*

4.3   Assessment Criteria Matrix

The framing questions will be assessed against the following assessment criteria matrix. The assessment criteria provide an objective means of undertaking and reporting the equalities assessments of the transport options on a consistent basis. The colour coding also allows for rapid identification of the impacts most likely to be significant, generally those assessed as having a major positive or negative effect.

Impact Score	Description	Symbol
Major Beneficial Effect	The policy contributes significantly to the requirements of the PSED, particularly to advancing equality of opportunity and meeting the needs of people with protected characteristics	++
Minor Beneficial Effect	The policy contributes to the requirements of the PSED, particularly to advancing equality of opportunity and meeting the needs of people with protected characteristics, economic and social issues, but not significantly	+
Neutral / Negligible Effect	The policy has no clear relationship with the requirements of the PSED or the relationship is negligible	0
Minor Adverse Effect	The policy adversely affects the requirements of the PSED particularly with respect to advancing equality of opportunity and meeting the needs of people with protected characteristics	-
Major Adverse Effect	The policy significantly adversely affects the requirements of the PSED particularly with respect to advancing equality of opportunity and meeting the needs of people with protected characteristics	--
Uncertain Effect	The policy has an uncertain relationship to the PSED requirements or insufficient detail or information may be available to enable an assessment to be made.	?
No Clear Relationship	There is no clear relationship between the proposed policy and the achievement of the PSED	~

5   Next Steps

This scoping document has set out the core evidence base with regards to the duties of public bodies under the Fairer Scotland Duty to inform the assessment of options being developed and appraised to inform the SEStran Regional Bus Strategy.

This scoping document is to be shared with each Local Authority within the South East Scotland area, to gather any feedback on the scoping documents and /or additional evidence base information.

During the appraisal of options for the strategy, an **interim assessment** is to be undertaken on the options being developed and appraised toward the development of the SEStran Regional Bus Strategy. This assessment will support the options appraisal process. A final assessment would also be undertaken as the Strategy itself is developed.

The interim assessment will be undertaken using the Guide questions and assessment criteria matrix as set out above, and informed through an engagement exercise, as discussed below. The outcome of the assessment and engagement will be clearly stated in the appraisal outcomes, with options adapted if required, given the assessment findings.

5.1 Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation

As part of a wider consultation exercise planned for the options appraisal and SRBS development process, engagement would include a range of key stakeholders pertinent to the duty as well as more generally through the planned public engagement exercise.

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